

Jan: 19th 1829

Dr Ch:

No 96

285 Chestnut St

An Inaugural Dissertation
On

Retrocedent Gout,

For the Degree

of

Paperd March 2, 1829

Doctor of Medicine,

In The

University of Pennsylvania;

By

Hugh Meredith,

Of

Doylestown, Pennsylvania.

— "Uti imitatio, ita affluxus." —

— January, 19th 1829. —



Retrocedent Gout.

So intricate is the minute structure of Man, so modified is morbid impression, and so inscrutable are the actions of Vitality, that Medical Science has always been involved in some degree of Hypothetical obscurity. Philosophers, as well as Physicians, have fallen into the labyrinth of speculative Illusion, in their endeavours to unfold the mysteries of Human Physiology.

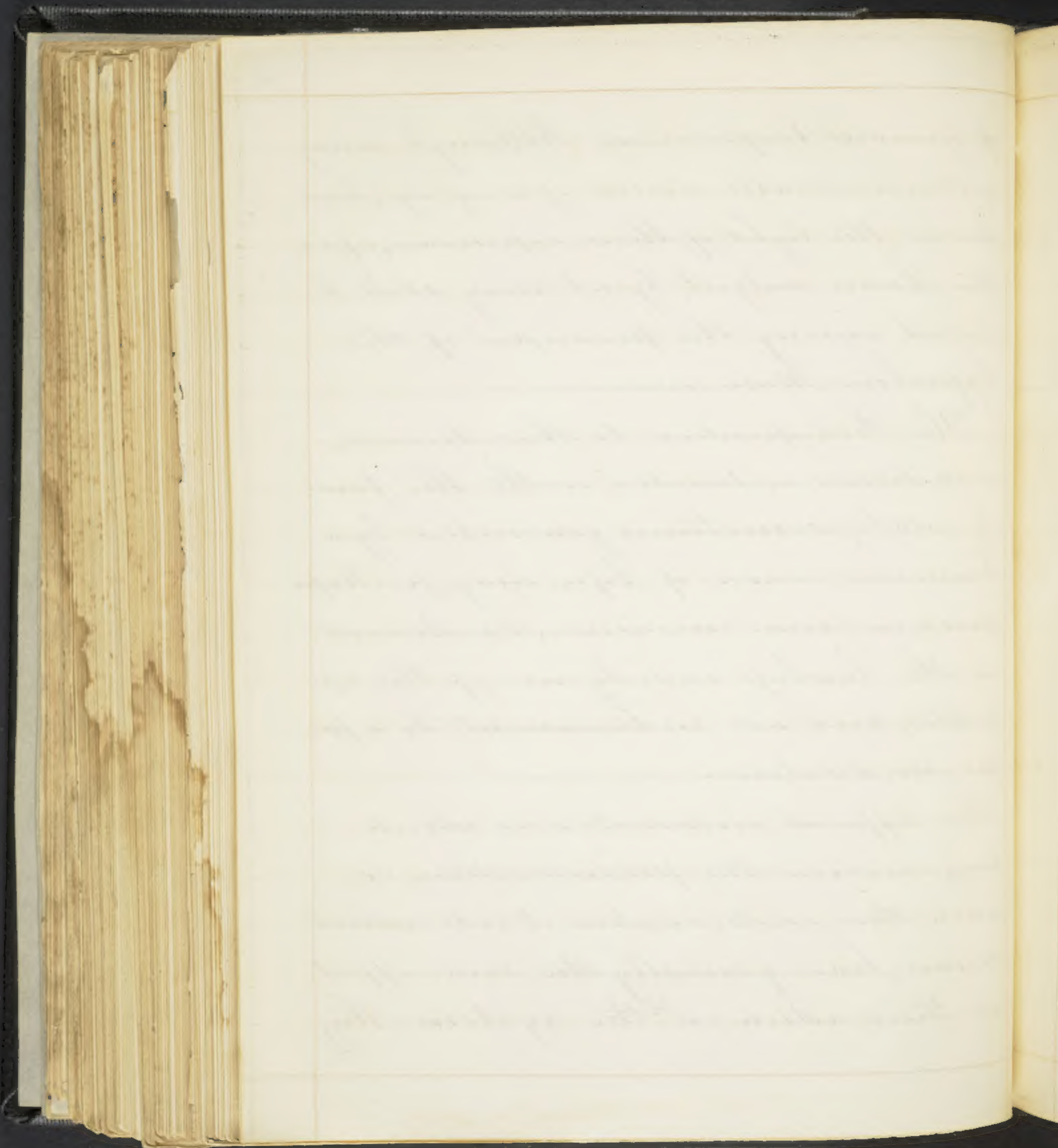
Various have been the Medical subjects upon which great minds have differed, but one of the most fruitful sources of hypothetical discussion, has been that disease, which, Protean-like in its character, and inveterate in its nature, has equally defied the knowledge of regular Practice, and the hardihood



of ignorant Empiricism. Although many of the most able writers of every age, have thrown the light of their experience, upon this obscure subject, Gout may still be classed among the principal of the *Opprobria Medicorum*.

The Predisposition to this disease, sometimes inherited with the family estate, sometimes generated by a luxurious course of life, may perhaps prove, in some measure, a restraint on the lawless indulgence of the appetites; and an inducement to a proper moderation.

The different circumstances which may occasion the predisposition, or, when this exists, awaken it into actual disease, have generally the same effect in their action on the system. They



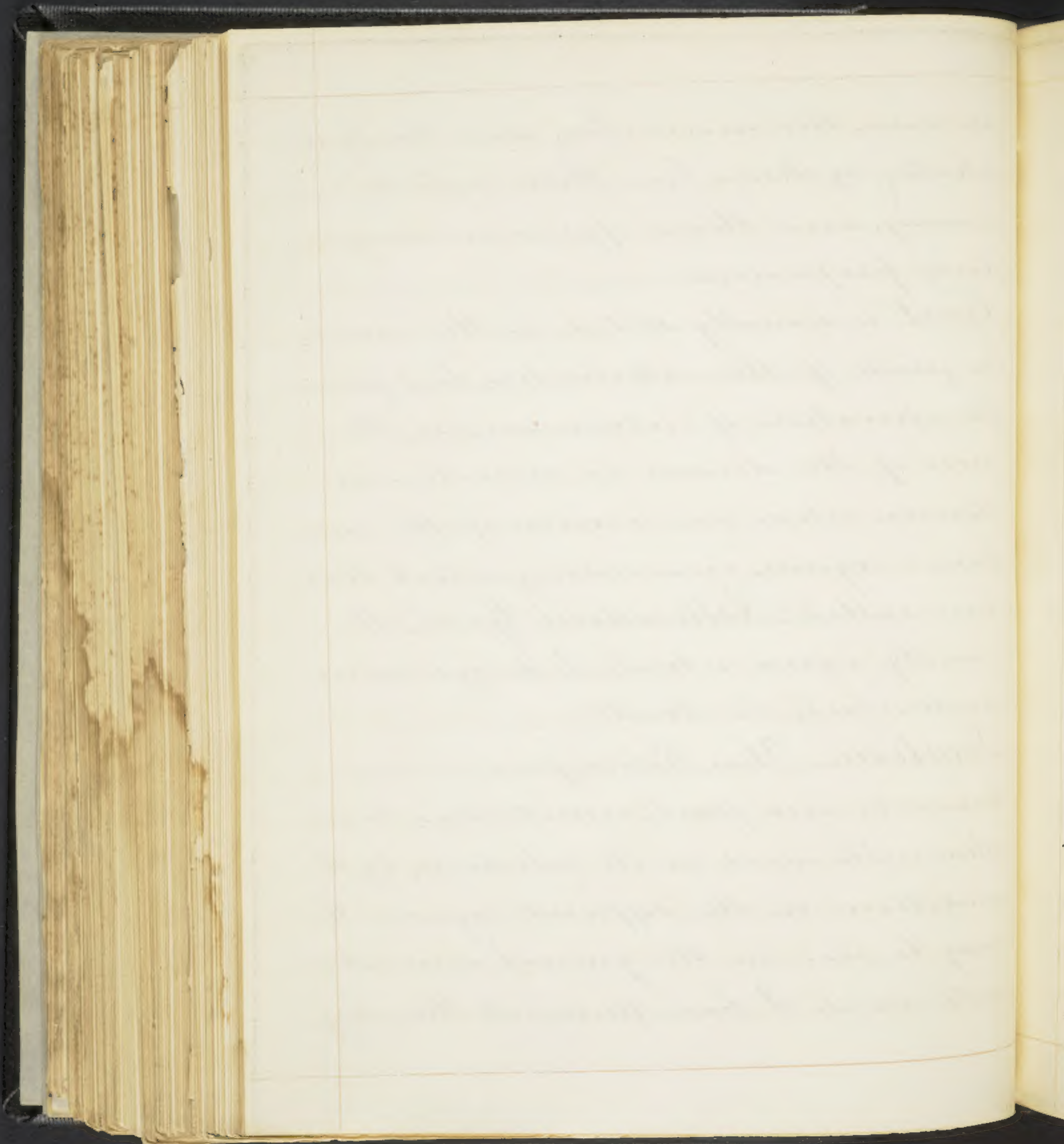
induce debility. Many of them give a predominance to the circulatory function, by maintaining an unnatural excitement of the digestive apparatus. But it is a law of the animal economy, that a continued over-excitement of any system of organs, must weaken the action of other parts, and also eventually debilitate its own functions. This happens in Gout.— The proper equilibrium, in the actions of the various systems of the body, is subverted.— The Stomach, with its kindred organism, is first stimulated then debilitated.— The blood-vessels are loaded with an unusual supply of their vital fluid, and their active power is unequal in different parts of the system.— The



nervous, the muscular, and the lymphatic systems, lose their relative bearing, and their offices are irregularly performed.

Gout is usually seated in the smaller joints of the extremities, but from the operation of certain causes, the force of the disease is sometimes thrown upon one or more of the internal organs, occasioning what has been called *Retrocèdent Gout*; the variety upon which I design more particularly to treat

Location. This *Retrocépion* is sometimes to one part, sometimes to another, influenced in its selection, by the conditions of the different organs. It may be seen in the general remarks with which I have premised this essay,



that the causes of Gout are such as tend in most cases to debilitate the alimentary canal. In fact, debility of the digestive organs, is the almost invariable attendant upon this disease, and it is owing to their weakened condition, that they so frequently suffer from translated action. Often times, when the bowels are in a state of torpor, there is a determination of blood to the head, as is evidenced by the headaches which occur at this period. If the sero-crassum take place under these circumstances, the brain, or perhaps one of its investing membranes, will probably become the seat of the disease. The heart and lungs, are also liable to attacks of this form of Gout. There are other parts, also,



as the kidneys, the bladder, and the rectum, which sometimes assume the morbid action incident to this malady.

Causes. Retrocedent Gout very frequently owes its production, to sudden changes of temperature, or to the application of cold with moisture to the surface of the body. Cold applications are often used to remove the pain, and subdue the inflammation of a ^{joint.} These sometimes occasion a translocation of action. Retrocession to the alimentary canal, is sometimes produced by the irritation of the more drastic purgatives. Stimulating food or drink, is a frequent cause of this irregular attack. A change in the accustomed diet, too suddenly made,



may be followed by a similar effect.

It may not be improper to point out the Nature of the Attack, which may result from the above mentioned causes. Poudanue remarks, that the character of the attack, as to inflammation or spasm, depends materially on the Temperament of the individual, whether nervous or sanguineous. In the sanguineous, the application of cold in any form, when it induces retrocession, commonly produces inflammatory action; while the same cause in the nervous, is generally only followed by spasm. Poudanue says, that many are considered the attack as always spasmodic.

Symptoms. These vary, according



to the causes, the seat, and the nature of the attack.

As the stomach is the organ most subject to retrocedent gout, the symptoms which arise, denote its condition, and indicate the nature of the affection. Excruciating pain ensues, and when of a spasmodic character, it is lessened by pressure on the abdomen. Nausea and vomiting distress the patient. The stomach appears to be sometimes distended with flatus, by an ejection of which, much relief is afforded. Unless the attack be very severe, the pulse is little affected, but when the spasm continues obstinate, it sinks and the patient becomes exhausted.

When the affection partakes more of



of the inflammatory condition, it resembles strongly some of the phlegmated states of the abdominal viscera. The pain is of a burning character, and more diffused than in the spasmodic variety, and pressure increases it to an agonizing degree. The pulse is full and hard, or small and irritated, showing that the local action, has aroused the general sympathies. There is sickness of the stomach, and vomiting, especially when any thing is taken into this organ. The stimulating treatment has the effect of increasing all these symptoms, and materially aggravating the danger of the patient.

When the metastasis takes place to the head, symptoms resembling those



of apoplexy, paralysis, or puerperitis may ensue. The resemblance which these forms of Retrocedent Gout, bear to some affections of the head, is very striking. In all, there is an increased determination of blood to this part, as is evidenced by the beating of the carotids, the flushed face, the intense pain, and the delirious wandering.

The Thoracic vessels are sometimes affected; and the disease may be ~~affected~~ mistaken for Asthma or Angina pectoris, if attention be not paid to the Diathesis, and other circumstances. By Professor Chapman, in his lectures on Angina, mentions several cases which have fallen under his notice, wherein



gouty individuals were apparently seized with this affection, all its prominent symptoms being present.

In these instances, convinced of the gouty nature of the attack, his remedial measures were directed accordingly, and his opinion and mode of treatment, were fully justified, by a subsidence of the pectoral distress, and a return of gout to the extremities.

Diagnosis. The great consideration in diagnosis, is the Diathesis, and this is here unequivocally marked. The metastases which ensues, also sufficiently indicates this anomalous form of Gout.

Prognosis. In forming a prognosis in acute attacks of disease, the circumstances



stances require the attention; first, the power of the system to resist, or overcome morbid impressions; and, secondly, the violence of the disease itself. In Rheumatic Gout, we must take into consideration, the age of the patient, the length of time he has been subject to Gout, his course of life, and the vigour of his constitution. Weighed and opposed to these, must be the exciting causes of the return, and the force of their operation, the part or parts which are affected, and the manner and degree in which they are affected, the duration of the affection, and the influence of the remedial treatment. When all these circumstances are carefully considered and



compared, a conclusion may be drawn, as to the favourable or unfavourable issue of the case.

This form of gout requires the immediate attention of the physician, and the promptest remedial measures must be resorted to, especially, if any of those organs, whose functions are most necessary to life, are invaded.

Treatment. I shall first endeavour to point out, the practice, which is more particularly applicable to that form of gout, which has been described as *spasmodic*. Thus, in its nature, so much resembles *latica*, that the practitioner must pursue, the same general course of treatment, as is adopted in that disease, namely



^{however,}
 being, the peculiarity of the patient's
 constitution. One of the most power-
 ful measures for overcoming spasm,
 is the abstraction of blood. It has
 accordingly been used with advan-
 tage, in this variety of Gout. It must
 not, however, be blindly resorted to,
 or decided without a cautious con-
 sideration of the circumstances of
 the case. For the rejection of irritating
 matter, and hence to allay the sick-
 ness of the stomach, emetics, and
 sometimes be usefully employed.
 The mildest are to be preferred. The
 diffusive stimulants, in some cases,
 should be our first resource. In other
 instances, they will more properly
 follow the treatment above detailed.
 Dr. Chapman directs their administra-



tion, in conjunction with liberal sanguineous depletion. In certain states of the system, these measures are attended with a similar effect,-- they equalize the irregular and disturbed circulation. Opium, wine, brandy, ether, carbonate of ammonia, camphor, and musk are the best of the stimulant class. They may be directed alone, or variously combined, and the doses must be proportioned to the severity of the attack, and the insensibility of the stomach. Mild purgatives are ~~directed~~ principally employed, as consecutive measures, directed to solicit the renewal of the functions of the intestinal canal. Gentle emetics are often preferable. During the course of treatment



embosom fermentations to the abdomen, are productive of the most dangerous consequences.

There is an indication, which must be attended to, in this, and all other cases of Retardant Yeast. We must endeavour to restore, to its legitimate seat, the translated action. Such means must be resorted to, as will arouse the natural action in the extremities. Immersion of the feet and legs in warm water, made more stimulating by the addition of common salt, or cayenne pepper, or the application of oedipacents, sinapisms, or vesicantes, to the extremities, are the most efficient means for ~~exciting~~ fulfilling this indication.

Where the attack is inflammatory,



blood letting is doubtless the most de-
 cided immediate measure. Some sections
 may not, however, be always safely ad-
 apted. Local detractions of blood, by
 cups or leeches, are often more safe
 and certain measures. Emollient pe-
 rimentations, or in lieu of them, a
 large blister to the abdomen, will
 be found of infinite service. The
 bowels should be gently evacuated,
 or at least, irritating fecal accumu-
 lations in them, should be presen-
 ted. The diet must be light and
 not stimulating.

When the strabismus has been to
 the ^{head,} strabismus lachrymatus, or paral-
 ysis, or producing delirium, the indi-
 cations are to direct the action from
 that part, and recall it to its usual



sent. The first indication is to be
accomplished, by general and topical
bleeding, purgatives, and emetics, by
cupping, lotions to the head, or
blister to the scalp or back of the
neck. To fulfil the second we must
resort to means already detailed.

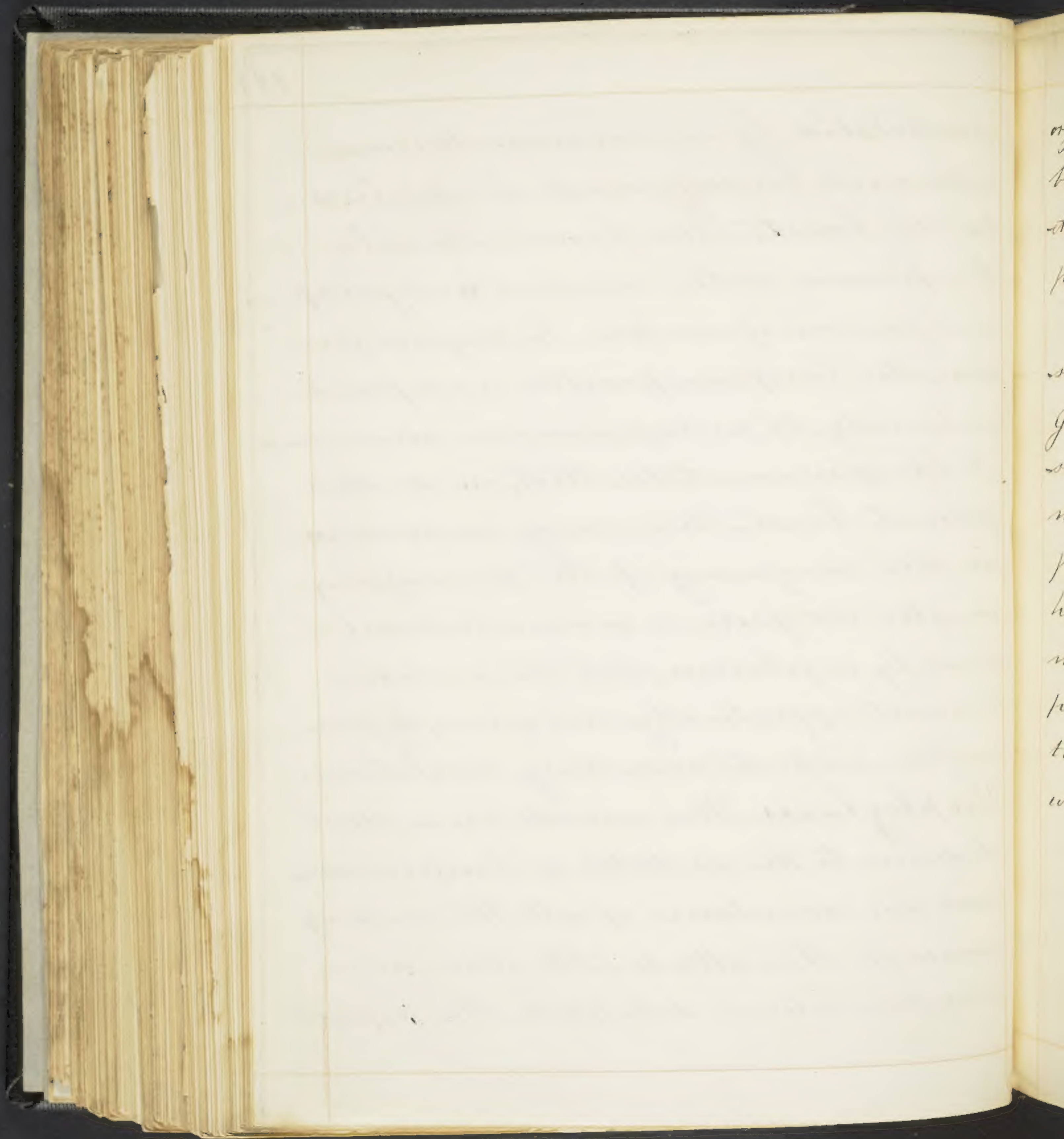
Gout, affecting the viscera of the
Human, simulating Asthma or Urege-
na pectoris, requires the promptest
remedial treatment. In these ca-
ses before alluded to, related by Dr.
Chapman, where the symptoms
were urgent, and the pulse tolerably
vigorous, copious venesection was em-
ployed with the most decided ad-
vantage. In some instances this was
even repeated, before relief was ob-
tained. Where venesection was



prohibited by any circumstances, cups and blisters must be applied to the breast. The bowels should be opened with calomel and jalap or infusion of senna. In Angina pectoris, the European practice is confined exclusively, to antispasmodic medicines.

Dr Chapman states, that, ~~in~~ in this form at least, these may answer ~~in~~ in the incipency of the paroxysm, or after its force is somewhat subdued by depletion; but its violence is most effectually overcome, by venesection and its auxiliary depletives.

Prophylaxis. This consists in a strict obedience to the dictates of Temperance, and an avoidance of all the exciting causes of the attack. All those irregularities which debilitate the different



organs of the animal economy, must be most heedfully shunned. The diet should be carefully attended to, and proper exercise regularly observed.

I may now conclude with the consideration of this variety of irregular Gout, though I am sensible it assumes various appearances I have not noticed, and attacks various parts I have not indicated. I have, however, treated of those cases which most frequently occur, wherein the patient with the most agonizing tortures, is fearfully threatened with immediate dissolution. —

